Published and Copyright (c) 2000
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- CC: Classic Chips
Rob Mahlert -- Web site

With Contributions by:

Mario Becroft
Rob Mahlert

To subscribe to A-ONE, send a message to: dpj@delphi.com
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the following sites:

http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm
http://www.icwhen.com/aone/
http://a1mag.atari.org
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #0248 12/01/00

~ Selecting Digital Cams ~ People Are Talking! ~ Wizztronics News!
~ Web Pyramid Scam Bust! ~ Navidad Virus Variant! ~ Video Games for Xmas
~ AOL: World Leading ISP ~ Galaxy Graphics Cards! ~ Scooby Doo for N64!
~ Electronic Accessories ~ A-ONE Reader Survey! ~ 'Dexter's Lab'

-* Politics Could Help Microsoft *-
-* Senate Committee Leans On Carnivore *-
-* Microsoft Seeks Reversal of Court Ruling! *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

I know I do this about a half dozen or so times a year, and it drives me crazy too...but I can't believe it's December already!! My leaves were just cleaned up today; I never had the time to do it myself this year, at least completely. And now the weather has turned once again to reflect another season of weather. I just can't believe (still!) that time flies by so quickly. Even my Thanksgiving leftovers are gone!

Our new web site is continuing to grow. Our first completed monthly readers' survey is over and we've posted the results in this issue. Interesting votes. Drop by (the address is above) and let us know what you think - survey and other feedback. We want it to reflect your needs! And no re-counts! <grin>

Well, I think I'm going to be short and sweet this week. My week has been crazy, working a variety of shifts and hours. I'm still trying to get my body adjusted to normalcy, whatever that means!

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

GALAXY (VMEBUS GRAPHICS CARD) AVAILABILITY

The first "Galaxy" graphics cards for the Atari Mega STE and TT are now available. The card provides a high-resolution colour video display adapter to suit common (S)VGA monitors at resolutions of up to 1280x1024 pixels and 16-bit colour depth (65,536 colours). Driver software for GEM is supplied.

The card will eventually also include an ethernet interface, but the firmware for this is not yet available. Therefore the cards currently available do not include an ethernet interface. The first cards with ethernet interface are expected to be available in the first half of 2001. I hope to offer an upgrade service for non-ethernet cards (at a cost) once ethernet support becomes available, but this is not confirmed.

Pricing on the graphics-only card will be 500 New Zealand dollars in single unit quantities, or approximately 200 US dollars. Availability is limited at this time and depending on the amount of orders received, it may or may not be possible to ship all orders immediately. Those

interested in the card should contact me to confirm availability.

More information and a picture of the card is available on the WWW at the following address:

http://gem.win.co.nz/mario/hardware/galaxy.html

Inquiries should be directed by email to Mario Becroft at mb@gem.win.co.nz

--
Mario Becroft <mb@gem.win.co.nz> - http://gem.win.co.nz/mario/
Atari hardware products - 68HC08 support site

Wizztronics New Falcon Board

[Note to editor: You can feel free to publish information as you see fit with th
e
understanding we are not guarantying the release of this product,nor
are we able to set the market price at this time.]

Wizztronics has been working on improving the Atari platform since the early 80's. One such development has been our new replacement System board. The cost associated with this new product has been overwhelming. We do not have a release date scheduled as yet, although a working prototype has been in the lab for several months now. Once the final design is approved it needs to be certified (FCC) before it can be released.

We have been targeting a cost under $300.00 for the Board alone, this is not been a definitive price; that will come shortly after all approvals have been met.

This board has been designed to replace failed system board for existing Falcon users as well as add a new outlet for new users. Yes, we get many requests for Falcon as of Today the 27 of November 2000.

We are building the main board and processor section separate to enable future upgrades for speed, We are improving the I/O including performance enhancements to the SCSI and IDE as well as high speed serial communications.

With the adaption of standard peripherals (keyboard and Mouse ports), replacement parts will be much easier to obtain.

Some features are, both 44 pin and 40 pin IDE confections, Internal SCSI connection and termination. On board Floppy support for 1 1.44 Floppy drive. IDC connections for Serial,Parallel. The use of a standard PC power supply, ATX will probably be in the final design due to it's availability and reduced cost.

Some Specs:

Microprocessor Motorola (Processor Slot)

68030 32 MHz

Buss Bandwidth 16/32 Bit

Socket for optional 68882 50MHz CO-Processor

Sockets for 4 72 pin SIMM on board supporting up to 128MB.

2 High speed serial Ports (enhanced to support 56k Modems)

1 SPP/ECP/EPP Parallel Port

1 MIDI Ports

Internal ATARI Compatible Cartridge Port

DSP/Audio Card upgradeable 56001 Standard

SCSI 2 and Ultra DMA 33 IDE support

AT Style Keyboard and Serial Mouse

100% code compatible with existing software

32 Bit Flash ROM’s on board (more speed) and easy OS upgrades beyond 4.04

=~=~=~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It’s been another long week at work. It never seems to end, does it?

Elsewhere in this issue you’ll find the results of A-ONE’s readers’ poll.

I find the results interesting. Interesting because there were 93 people who voted, but only 91 votes cast. I can only assume that the other two were from Palm Beach county in Florida. <grin>

I also find the results a bit surprising. Take a look and give us some feedback on what YOU think.

Well, this is going to be a short column, so I’ll keep my intro short as well.

Now on to the good stuff.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Mark Friedman sends up an S.O.S....

"...to any Falcon experts,
It seems like the DSP chip on my Falcon has given up the ghost.

I have a Falcon with Centurbo II installed, and that is working pretty well, but any prog. that uses the DSP won't boot up.
So, for example I can load up the midi only portion of Cubase audio, but not the audio part. Or if I use Aniplayer, I can view a JPG file, but only if I disable "use DSP" in the menu. Other progs. that only use the CPU seem to work OK. Could my DSP chip simply have burnt out? Or does it have something to do with the Centurbo, perhaps running it too fast? Does anyone know of a program that would verify if a DSP chip is working?"

Shiuming Lai tells Mark:

"1. Use the Atari diagnostic. This will tell you
if the DSP SRAM is faulty (more likely)

2. Your DSP clock wire perhaps not
separated from the SDMA 25MHz, or has
moved somehow and is picking up interference,
maybe even come loose or completely off!

3. Your DSP may be faulty, though I've seen
countless Falcon DSPs run at 50MHz for
years with no problem

4. You have old DSP timing? Run the CENTBENCH
program, if you get something like 475MHz for the
DSP speed, you have old timings."

Tom Wild posts:

"Please help: I made some music several years ago with a atari 1040 st and cubase. Now I have a pc system and I need to get this old files to work. Is it somehow possible to read my atari disk with my pc?"

Kevin Dermott tells Tom:

"Try http://www.emulators.com/ gemulator explorer, it claims to read some Atari formatted disks. The demo only copies one file at once."

Lonny Purcell asks for help with his Hades060:

"For the moment I'm booting an old SCSI drive as I seem to be having trouble getting the machine to accept an IDE drive. Perhaps someone has some advise or had similar problems?

I have a brand new Quantum 15gig which always results in a "spurious interrupt" error. The msg appears directly after the memory test at boot time, but before HD driver even loads.

I have an older 1gig Fujitsu which was pulled from a working amiga setup. Booting with this drive results in a "bus error" at the same point.

Both drives completely halt the boot stage so I never get to the desktop. I am 100% sure they are connected correctly and set as master during all tests. I even have printed docs which came with the new drive so there is no guess work on the settings or cabling.

At this point I'm baffled. Maybe the 15gig is too big or too new? It has udma 100/ATA blah... and so on, all of which I don't really need. The older drive perhaps needs re-initialized? Maybe the amiga has place data where the hades looks for a boot record?"

Jim Logan tells Lonny:

"My drive came pre-prepared - it sounds as if yours didn't. The formatting for an Atari is said to be different from that of a PC. Could that have anything to do with it?

If you boot with the SCSI can you then run HDDriver to read the IDE? Don't forget that HDDriver is not guaranteed to run with the Hades (caching of SCSI addresses or something). Nevertheless, my IDE runs with HDDriver (7.61 I think)."

Lonny tells Jim:

"I do have the HD Driver version that is Ok with the hades. My problem is I'm simply stuck. If I disconnect the SCSI which I really don't need and place the HD Driver master disk in the floppy, I should be all set. However, since the error occurs after the memory test and is fatal, it halts never reaching the desktop or booting the floppy. No matter what I do I am forced to remove the IDE drive or the machine won't boot at all.

I have mailed Medusa about it, since it should not halt so abruptly at startup."

Paul WIlliamson tells Lonny:

"I know it may not help with your present problem, but just for the record, my Hades came supplied with HD Driver 7.54. I have never upgraded
as this does everything I want and appears to behave perfectly. The only
time I have a SCSI problem is with Cubase, and I have been assured this is connected to the way Cubase was written.

It would certainly be worth your while getting hold of an older version of HD Driver that is more likely to work than the recent versions.

Meanwhile, good luck with your project - I'm sure you'll get it all running soon."

Lonny tells Paul:

"Medusa wrote me back and says "new" drives can be a problem. Didn't go into any detail, and it don't explain why the older one fails either. It was not from an Atari and I have no means to wipe it clean here at home.

Anyway, it would be most helpful if all the Hades owners here could possibly tell me the exact make and model of their IDE drives? Then my intention is to find such a drive that is known to work, and add this info to the Hades HYP I've already started on."

Edward Baiz jumps in and adds his thoughts:

"Have you tried just booting the Hades with a floppy and then running the HDDriver program from the floppy?? If this works, maybe you could format the drive with Hddriver and partition it. It may be that your settings in HDDriver somehow conflict with the drives. Try booting the SCSI drive then run the utilities program and have a look."

'Jules' asks for help with an old 520:

"I have a really old 520ST at home still in working order apart from the internal FDD (single sided unit) anyone here know of somewhere I can go to in the UK to get a spare??"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Jules:

"I have some double sided units, all been done up. (well, cleaned!) About four of mine are from Acorn machines (BTW they work well) and about 3 others are Atari one's with the front moulding.

FS: Also I have Marpet RAM expansion (no manuals, but will help with installation) with 2*256kb simms to upgrade a 520STFM to 1040. All working order, no bent pins. As far as I know, one can put 4*1mb simms to get full 4mb."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Make sure you check out our website (www.atarinews.org) soon and often. There'll be a new survey up by now. Don't worry about 'butterfly' ballots... we're a bit more advanced than that. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Scooby Doo! Dexter's Laboratory!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Xtreme Sports! NBA Jam 2001!
Tomb Raider Chronicles!
And much more!

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Acclaim Sports Brings Arcade Style Action to the
Game Boy Color With NBA Jam 2001

Acclaim Sports announced that NBA JAM 2001 for the Game Boy Color shipped to retail outlets nationwide November 28th.

‘‘One of the most recognizable brands in sports video gaming history is back this season when NBA JAM 2001 slams its way on to the Game Boy Color," stated Brian Shields, marketing manager for Acclaim Sports. ‘‘NBA JAM 2001 is packed with all new game modes as well as classic JAM favorites that gamers know and love."

NBA JAM 2001 features special signature moves from the NBA’s finest, like the famed ‘‘Utah Jazz" pick and role, Jason Kidd’s deadly crossover dribble and Scott Pippen’s untouchable low post bank shot. Extraordinary new moves include skyhooks, alley-oops, tip-ins, reverse lay ups and off the glass passes. NBA JAM 2001 also features the debut of ‘‘Fun Mode", packed with player ‘‘Hotspots", ‘‘Hangtime", ‘‘Half-court Superdunks" and ‘‘On-Fire" modes. Players can unlock secret teams for additional play, including the NBA Rookie Team, East and West All-Star Teams and the All-NBA Team.

NBA JAM 2001 will feature all 29 National Basketball Association teams with over 140 NBA Superstars. This season Acclaim Sports brings the best in 2-on-2 arcade action with blazing fast breaks and rim-rocking slam dunks along with color commentary for spectacular moves and the ability to play an entire NBA season filled with injuries, player trades and post-season play. NBA JAM 2001 brings you the ultimate in sports video gaming with real life skills and attributes such as Karl Malone’s one-handed delivery dunk, Reggie Miller and Latrell Sprewell’s unstoppable perimeter game and Jason Williams’ dizzying behind the back passes. There are 3 levels of game play: High School, Pro and Legend along with in-game player highlights featuring full player, team and season statistics.

NBA JAM 2001 will be supported by a nationwide print campaign and an extensive online campaign, including a dedicated website and promotions on AcclaimSports.com. NBA Jam 2001 packaging and advertising features Karl Malone (Utah Jazz), Latrell Sprewell (New York Knicks), Reggie Miller (Indiana Pacers), Jason Kidd (Phoenix Suns), Scottie Pippen (Portland Trailblazers) and Jason Williams (Sacramento Kings).

Acclaim Entertainment Ships First Title For PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System

Acclaim Entertainment announced that Super Bust-A-Move for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system has shipped to national retail outlets. Super Bust-A-Move brings the infinite re-playability of Acclaim’s most popular puzzle franchise, Bust-A-Move, to the PlayStation 2, while taking advantage of the tremendous technical capabilities of the newly launched system.

‘‘Acclaim is thrilled to be part of the exciting PlayStation 2 launch," says Evan Stein, Brand Director at Acclaim Entertainment. ‘‘As the only established puzzle franchise available for the PlayStation 2, Super Bust-A-Move’s completely enhanced gameplay delivers the addictive, competitive action that gamers crave."

In addition to the brand’s classic gameplay, Super Bust-A-Move features thousands of all-new, brain-busting boards of colorful puzzles, characters, and animations using high-resolution graphics. New additions to the series,

including conveyor belt walls that change the trajectory of the shot and bubble captives in need of rescue, add an exhilarating new twist to Bust-A-Move's beloved game style. Taito developed Super Bust-A-Move delivers an exciting, multi-player gaming experience to both casual gamers and long-time game enthusiasts.

Acclaim is currently developing several new games for the PlayStation 2 scheduled to be released later in the Company's 2001 fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2000 - Aug. 31, 2001). These titles include All-Star Baseball 2002, and a surfing title, expected to ship in the Spring and Summer of 2001.

Lara Croft Returns for Final Chapter in Tomb Raider Chronicles

Lara Croft, the world's most popular cyber action heroine, returns to video game screens in Tomb Raider Chronicles. Published by Eidos Interactive, Tomb Raider Chronicles has hit stores nationwide for the Sega Dreamcast, Sony Playstation and PC format.

Tomb Raider Chronicles will be the last in this popular franchise to be developed for the PlayStation game console and marks an end to the Tomb Raider series as we know it.

The game takes place only days after The Last Revelation at a memorial service for Lara, where her closest friends, Winston and the family priest, Father Dunstan, reminisce about her previous exploits. Each adventure is introduced via full motion video ''flashback" sequences that take players into the action.

The PC version of Tomb Raider Chronicles allows fans to create their own gaming levels for the first time. A unique level editor allows the user to build game levels in the same manner as the actual Tomb Raider development team. The level editor can even be used on previous entries in the Tomb Raider game series.

''With the release of Tomb Raider Chronicles, we decided to reward our fans by further enhancing game features, revealing more details about Lara's life than ever before and providing a level editor that allows players to create their own Tomb Raider game," said Adrian Smith, of Core Design, Eidos' wholly-owned development house.

True to the globetrotting fashion of the franchise, Tomb Raider Chronicles takes players into four different locations around the world, featuring the Irish Black Isle, a German U-boat, the streets of Rome and a hi-tech New York-styled Tower Block. In Chronicles, each episode has a unique focus and requires players to adopt a different strategy.

In the Irish levels, players take the role of the 16-year-old young Lara character introduced in Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation. The player must depend on the use of skill and guile rather than weaponry to deal with many puzzles and traps. The German U-boat levels are filled with action in an ''X-Files" feel, while the Rome levels comprise classic Tomb Raider adventuring. Finally, the Tower Block features hi-tech systems that require stealth and strategy. For the first time, Lara has a sidekick, ZIP, a techno-savvy, African-American companion who provides guidance during the mission.

Chronicles brings together the most popular elements of previous Tomb Raider titles with improved features. Hard-core Tomb Raider fans will appreciate the technical modifications made to the game engine for improved graphics and smooth game play. Game environments display greater detail, improved lighting and interaction with more characters and objects. The inventory system is also improved to collect more items and allow greater variation on the ‘‘combine" option.

Chronicles is also a ‘‘smarter" game with extensively overhauled artificial intelligence that enables enemy characters to react to sound. Players now must use ‘‘stealth" to achieve goals in the game. During hand-to-hand combat scenarios, Lara can creep behind enemies and use chloroform to disable them. Also, line of sight issues are modified so that enemies can hide more effectively - Lara will not lock on until the enemy is clearly visible to the player.

Even novice gamers can enjoy Chronicles by completing objectives in the game that are clear and easily identified. In addition, the game features more full motion video (FMV) than any of the previously released Tomb Raider titles. The FMV adds a compelling story telling element that enhances the game experience.

For the die-hard Lara Croft fans, Chronicles features two new in-game costumes Lara: a ‘‘Matrix" style catsuit with a communication headset, plus a camouflage outfit. The game also includes new Lara animations and moves. New moves allow Lara to make use of tightropes, suspended bars and grappling ropes. The combination of bars and ropes requires the player to traverse areas in a variety of ways than previously seen. A ‘‘search" option for Lara is also included to enable her to look through files, drawers and take any items of use. New weapons include a sniper rifle and a grappling hook gun.

Infogrames, Inc. Takes Sony Playstation on a Gag-Filled Ride to Stores This Week With Looney Tunes Racing!

Rev up your engines and wind up your pie-throwing arm. Infogrames, Inc. announced that it is bringing Looney Tunes prank-pulling fun to life in ‘‘Looney Tunes Racing," which heads to stores this week. The PlayStation game allows players to take control of the wildest bunch of cartoon characters in an all-out race to the finish line. Now, let’s burn some rubber!

In the game, ACME Corporation, the corporate juggernaut behind such successful products as the ACME Falling Anvil, is sponsoring a number of races to see who is the wackiest racing champion. Players choose from eight popular Looney Tunes characters, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Lola Bunny, Marvin The Martian, and Tasmanian Devil, plus additional bonus characters, all with their own custom karts and custom character animations. The characters are true to their rich identities and interact with each other as they would in a real Looney Tunes cartoon. Enhancing the experience are official Warner Bros. voice actors and an original interactive musical score inspired by classic Merrie Melodies, each bringing the characters and game to life.

‘‘Looney Tunes Racing" offers new depth to the kart-racing genre by providing licensed characters true to their cartoon heritage,‘‘ said Jeff Nuzzi, director of marketing for Infogrames’ I-Stars Label. "The fantastic

characters, interactive track features, and hysterical power-ups will make players feel as though they are truly racing through a real Looney Tunes cartoon. Combining the wildly popular mass-market appeal of kart racing with the familiarity and humor of the Looney Tunes characters, the game results in an interactive racing adventure for all ages.‘‘

Players will race their characters through more than 16 unique tracks, including many infamous locations made popular by the Looney Tunes cartoons, such as the Giant’s Garden and Marvin The Martian’s Planet X. Each race features unique environmental gags and hilarious ACME devices players can activate, such as lightening strikes and homing cream pies to pummel opponents and slow them down.

‘‘Looney Tunes Racing" also features two wild one-player racing modes as well as two-player split-screen mayhem in three hilarious multi-player modes. The two-player modes include Vs. mode, Battle mode, and Wacky mode, offering players a variety of different racing options to keep the racing challenge fresh and exciting. Vs. mode allows two players to compete against each other on a single track. Set in an arena, Battle mode’s objective is not to race, but to survive the pranks and tricks employed by opponents and be the last man standing. Wacky mode is a two-player version of a party game, where three, five or nine level tournaments are set up at random, and players are challenged over a variety of terrain types and game styles. Because of the random generation of levels in Wacky mode, ‘‘Looney Tunes Racing" is never the same game twice, making gameplay virtually endless.

Developed by Infogrames’ San Jose Label, ‘‘Looney Tunes Racing" is available at an estimated retail price of $19.99 and can be found at most major retail outlets.

THQ Ships ’Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers’ for Nintendo 64

Game publisher THQ Inc. and Warner Bros. Consumer Products announced the release of the much-anticipated ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Nintendo 64.

Based on one of the longest-running kids’ shows of all time, ‘‘Scooby-Doo!," THQ’s release of ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" marks the first of several ‘‘Scooby-Doo!" interactive adventures. ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" is now available at major retail outlets nationwide.

‘‘The tremendous success of ’Scooby-Doo!’ has made the world’s most popular mystery-solving dog a household name," stated Germaine Gioia, vice president, licensing, THQ. ‘‘We are delighted to be working with Warner Bros. Consumer Products in adding such a high-profile property to THQ’s extensive kids’ software library."

‘‘THQ’s proven track record in the children’s gaming arena, make them the ideal publisher for ’Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers,"’ said Michael Harkavy, Vice President, Publishing, Kids’ WB!, Music, and Interactive Entertainment for Warner Bros. Consumer Products. ‘‘We are pleased to bring together the assets of one our key licensees, THQ, with the strength of one our most successful properties, ’Scooby-Doo’ on one of the most popular gaming systems this holiday season."

Scooby-Doo was created by animation legends William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, and ‘‘Scooby-Doo Where Are You?" is one of the longest-running animated series in television history. Currently airing on the Cartoon Network, the series is one of the network’s top-rated shows and is viewed more than 23 times per week. Scooby-Doo was also recently voted kids’ favorite cartoon character on Cartoon Network.

In ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Nintendo 64, Scooby-Doo and his friends will face off against some of the all-time classic villains, including The Witch Doctor, The Black Knight and The Snow Ghost.

Players guide Scooby-Doo and the gang though three classic episodes plus one never-before-seen adventure, each featuring more than a dozen environments. With actual character voices from the ‘‘Scooby-Doo!" cartoon actors, and tons of humorous game play, ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" is sure to bring out the Zoinks! in all of us.

Bam! Entertainment Puts Cartoon Network’s Brainy Boy Genius to the Test in Dexter’s Laboratory: Robot Rampage Video Game

Bam! entertainment, an entertainment software publisher, announced that Dexter’s Laboratory: Robot Rampage is now available for Game Boy Color at retailers in North America.

Based on the Emmy-nominated animated Cartoon Network series Dexter’s Laboratory, the game features the boy genius in his adventures to outwit robots that attack his lab. Dexter’s Laboratory is one of the highest-rated shows on Cartoon Network.

In Dexter’s Laboratory: Robot Rampage, players help Dexter battle his archrival Mandark who has infiltrated the lab and reprogrammed Dexter’s robots. The robots begin tearing apart Dexter’s laboratory, and he must deactivate them in order to save it.

In this action adventure, gamers are challenged to help Dexter find all of the pieces of the control codes scattered about the vast lab by the evil Mandark. Armed with only a laser pistol and his keen intellect, Dexter must run, jump and blast his way through the levels of his lab to discover the location of the robot command codes and outwit Mandark. Once Dexter has all of the pieces of the codes, he can disable the robots.

KEY FEATURES:

* Choose from any of three super-heroic outfits for Dexter as he leaps across elevator shafts and battles a host of robots that are bent on his destruction
* Journey with Dexter through 16 levels of his top-secret laboratory as he searches for the hidden command codes
* Scour the lab for exotic weapons to protect Dexter from Mandark’s mechanical minions

Today is the Worst Day Ever

Incredible Crisis for the Sony PlayStation game console combines both the worst day imaginable and the most fun you've ever producing the most prolific and insane adventure ever. Published by Titus Software Corporation, the game ships November 23, 2000. ''This game is whacked -- We guarantee it!"

Tokyo-based Polygon Magic developed this game as the craziest thing you'll ever put into a PlayStation. Combined with an energetic soundtrack from the Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra, the game is full of infectious tunes and wacky adventures. Incredible Crisis is comprised of 24 unique and exciting mini- games, which constantly change the game pace. Centering on Taneo, and his bizarre, Japanese family, the game sets the characters on the most chaotic day of their lives.

From elevator free-falls, to runaway medical stretchers, you must help the family avoid a bitter demise by completing wacky puzzles to survive. Too many wrong moves and your stress meter will reach nuclear meltdown. Incredible Crisis has certainly developed a new entertainment genre of seriously wacky games.

Incredible Crisis hits store shelves November 23, 2000 at a phenomenal pricepoint of $19.99.

ATV Offroad Fury Steers the Thrill and Excitement of ATV Racing Onto Playstation2

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced the January 2001 release of ATV Offroad Fury, an exhilarating and action-packed ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) racing game that showcases the stunning graphic capabilities of the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Featuring white-knuckle action and speed, huge free-roaming environments, more than 20 different racing tracks and a hard, alternative soundtrack, ATV Offroad Fury harnesses the power of the PlayStation 2, bringing the true spirit of ATV racing to life in the most realistic ATV simulation yet.

Featuring more than 12 ATV models, six different event types and three styles of bikes for players to choose from, ATV Offroad Fury provides gamers with a multitude of options to enhance their ATV racing experience. Players can select their ATV from high-profile manufacturers such as Honda, Yamaha and Kawasaki. In addition, a Garage feature allows players to further customize their driving experience by tweaking options such as tire friction, shock reaction, steering and braking. ATV Offroad Fury also includes a stellar lineup of music from a variety of popular artists, providing players with an emotionally-charged racing environment.

''ATV Offroad Fury immerses gamers in a realistic and fast-paced racing world complete with stunts, enormous environments and adrenaline-pumping action," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ''Gamers and racing enthusiasts alike will be completely absorbed by the authentic feel and the challenging competitive action of this exciting new game for PlayStation 2."

With the Multitap (for PlayStation2) ATV Offroad Fury allows up to four players to compete against one another in a race experience like no other. Huge, free-roaming environments of up to two square miles in area, encourage players to experience true off-road racing, navigating their way to the finish line over sandy deserts, rocky hillsides and thick forest

mountains. Players can choose from more than 12 different ATV models, taking into consideration factors such as traction, acceleration, top speed and stability, depending upon the landscape. Realistic physics force gamers to feel every bump, turn and crash in the terrain, and a track editor allows players to diversify the competition by creating their own unique racetracks. With more than 20 tracks and six authentic event types to choose from, including Cross Country, Enduro races and Freestyle Stunt competitions, players sit in the riders seat and will be tested to their absolute limits, as the thrill of ATV racing comes to life on the PlayStation 2.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates ATV Offroad Fury ‘‘RP" for ‘‘Rating Pending."

EA Sports Supercross Ships for the PlayStation

Grab your bars and get ready to hit some of the biggest and most extreme tricks ever in the follow up to last year’s number one motocross videogame on console, EA SPORTS Supercross. Whether you are looking to win the EA SPORTS Supercross Series, race high-speed outdoor motocross or go big in freestyle mode, you can now do it all as Electronic Arts (EA) announced the release of EA SPORTS Supercross for the Sony PlayStation.

The game’s intuitive physics model and sophisticated AI allow gamers of all levels to jump right in and compete for supercross, motocross, or freestyle championships. Partnering with supercross champion Jeff Emig, freestyle king Mike Metzger, and 2000 Gravity Games champion Brian Deegan, the development team was able to translate motocross into a videogame while staying true to the nuances of the sport.

‘‘EA SPORTS has put together the definitive motocross game," said Jeff Emig, former AMA Supercross and Outdoor National Motocross champion. ‘‘You can race the EA SPORTS Supercross Series as one of the greats, take it outdoors and go ballistic, or get huge air in freestyle mode."

More than 35 of the hottest stunts and 4 freestyle worlds are incorporated into EA SPORTS Supercross. Even the sport’s latest stunts have made it into the game including the Hart Attack, McMetz, Mulisha Air, and the Backflip.

More than 25 top riders are in the game including supercross stars Jeff Emig, Kevin Windham, Ezra Lusk and Mike LaRocco are included in the game. Also included are top Arenacross riders Buddy Antunez and Denny Stephenson. And for the first time in a videogame and exclusive to EA SPORTS, are women’s Motocross champions Stefy Bau and Jessica Patterson are included, as well as motocross legends David Bailey, Roger DeCoster, and Johnny O’Mara.

‘‘This is the ultimate motocross game for PlayStation owners," said Dave Davis, Executive Producer, Electronic Arts. ‘‘With EA SPORTS Supercross gamers can become a part of the blazing speed and insane stunts that bring fans out to live supercross, motocross, and freestyle events across the nation."

EA SPORTS has taken their commitment to supercross to the next level with an exclusive licensing agreement with SFX Motor Sports Group as the official sponsor of Supercross in 2001 and beyond. EA SPORTS brings the

marketing expertise of the strongest brand in the interactive sports market to EA SPORTS Supercross Series. Working with SFX Motor Sports Group, EA SPORTS will integrate the interactive product into the overall supercross fan experience. For more details please visit www.pacesupercross.com

EA SPORTS Supercross for the PlayStation is rated ‘‘E" (Everyone) by the ESRB.

FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer Arrives On the PlayStation 2

Electronic Arts launched the world’s hottest video game franchise on the world’s hottest game console. The EA SPORTS FIFA series newest edition, FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, has arrived on store shelves. What the Star Wars series is for the movie industry EA SPORTS FIFA console game is to the interactive industry -- it’s the world’s best selling, highest-grossing interactive sports video game franchise.

The roll out of FIFA 2001 in Europe and North America follows on the heels of the recent success of an earlier edition released in Japan last spring. FIFA Soccer World Championship rose to the number one position this summer on the PlayStation 2 console charts and is currently among the top ten PlayStation 2 games in Japan.

FIFA 2001 on the PlayStation 2 game console features all the top soccer talent from around the world set in a stunning lifelike universe. EA SPORTS used motion capture technology to render the precise moves of top stars such as Edgar Davids, Paul Scholes, Thierry Henry, Gaizka Mendieta, Pavel Kuka and Shimon Gershon. The results are stunning.

The finely detailed players and precise facial animation, combined with motion-captured moves from the preeminent players in the world, delivers the most authentic game of interactive soccer. The ease and fluidity of the controls also allows even first time players to appreciate the raw excitement of soccer.

The game features an ‘‘on the field" dynamic mix of players shouting, crowds chanting and top play-by-play talent from around the world, as well as music specially provided by techno star Moby. A special remix of Moby’s breakout hit, ‘‘Bodyrock," opens the gaming experience.

‘‘The combination of soccer talent, innovative gameplay and music creates an unrivaled interactive soccer experience," said FIFA executive producer Marc Aubanel. ‘‘We’ve been making FIFA games for over eight years and we continue to find revolutionary ways to enhance the experience for our fans. With FIFA 2001 we were able to take the player holding the controls and teleport him onto the field. The crowds come alive with amazing crowd animation effects in a thunderous stadium. Special effects abound with incredible weather effects, animating shadows and breath-taking light refractions that simulate a living environment. FIFA 2001 provides the full range of visceral heartbreak or glory when that shot hits the crossbar and slips past the goalie."

With more than 50 National teams from over 15 different leagues, the game choices and competition are real and intense. Major League Soccer is featured alongside Europe’s best including the Premier League, German Bundesliga, Spanish Premier League and the French LNF for a comprehensive,

global line-up. Intelligent commentary is provided by legendary English announcer John Motson and soccer icon Mark Lawrenson. FIFA 2001 provides an unparalleled collection of today’s best national teams, domestic leagues and international matches from around the world in a variety of game modes including Friendly, League, Cup and Custom modes.

FIFA 2001 is available for the PlayStation and PlayStation 2 game consoles and PC. FIFA 2001 is rated ‘‘E" (Everyone) by the ESRB. DC United standout Ben Olsen was used for marketing and advertising materials.

Infogrames, Inc. Sends Xtreme Sports for Sega Dreamcast Gliding Into Stores This Week

Infogrames, Inc. announced that its alternative sports game, Xtreme Sports, for Sega Dreamcast will begin shipping to stores this week. Xtreme Sports combines competition in six different alternative sports including Snowboarding, ATV Racing, Mountain Biking, Hang Gliding and Bungee Jumping.

‘‘It’s a good thing that providing a true adrenaline rush is legal!" said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing for the sports and racing label at Infogrames, Inc. ‘‘The feel of the powdery snow under your sliding snowboard, the rumble of lava beneath your ATV’s tires and the crackle of gravel and rocks spitting up at you as your mountain bike careens down a mountainside-that is Xtreme Sports."

Xtreme Sports offers players a chance to compete in some of the world’s most extreme sporting events all within a single race. The game’s engine has the unique ability to seamlessly integrate multiple sports such as snowboarding, ATV racing, mountain biking, hang gliding and bungee jumping. A player might begin a competition on a multi-environment racetrack by snowboarding, then hang gliding and finally end the race with mountain biking. Besides racing for the best time, players can perform tricks, attempt huge jumps, drive across lava or race out of control down steep slopes and cliffs.

With 12 regular tracks and six additional practice tracks, Xtreme Sports offers a variety of exotic locations. Mountain biking in Maui will find players navigating a rope bridge, while bungee jumping in Kilimanjaro will have a player leaping from a balloon and landing on a waiting snowboard. Players can also partake in a hang gliding adventure over the Scottish Highlands, or participate in an ATV excursion over a narrow bridge in Stryn, Norway.

Xtreme Sports features a licensed soundtrack of alternative music from the London record label Ninja Tune Records. Bands on the Xtreme Sports soundtrack include Amon Tobin, Cabbage Boy, Cold Cut, Dynamic Syncopation, Irresistible Force, London Funk Allstars, Mr. Scruff and DJ Food.

The game’s four unique characters include Nina, an 18-year-old from Sweden, Raga, a 22-year-old Jamaican, Noel, a 21-year-old from Great Britain and Cath, a 19-year-old American. Each character has two different outfits available, a summer outfit and a winter outfit. The clothing in Xtreme Sports is provided by the European sports brand 55DSL.

Developed by Innerloop Studios AS in Norway, Xtreme Sports allows for single player and two-player simultaneous head-to-head competition. Xtreme Sports will be available at most major retail outlets for an estimated

retail price of $29.99.

Attention Holiday Shoppers: THQ Has Hot New Games for Everyone on Your Gift List

THQ Inc. announced its exciting holiday lineup for kids of all ages.

With brand new titles for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Sega Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, and Game Boy Color, THQ means one-stop shopping for everyone from the hard-core gamer to the emerging children's markets.

THQ's holiday lineup includes titles from its World Wrestling Federation, Scooby Doo, Power Rangers, Rugrats and action sports lines as well as an entire library of familiar Game Boy Color games including ''Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and ''Star Wars Episode 1: Obi-Wan's Adventures."

The most anticipated console system of the year now boasts what has been called the best console role-playing game to date, ''Summoner" for PlayStation 2 (MSRP: $49.99; ESRB: T). Touted for its original story line, deep game play, expansive towns, brilliant graphics and unique summoning feature, Summoner appeals to the core game enthusiasts.

Families can get together with a number of THQ's video games geared specifically toward young kids. ''Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue(TM)" (PlayStation, MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: E; Nintendo 64, MSRP: $49.99; ESRB: E; and Game Boy Color, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E) allows fans of the television show to play as their favorite heroes in real Power Rangers adventures.

Based on Nickelodeon's brand new feature film, ''Rugratsin Paris - The Movie" (PlayStation, MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: E; Nintendo 64, MSRP: $49.99; ESRB: E; and Game Boy Color, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E) is the perfect way for families to shape the Rugrats babies' adventures in Paris.

Families can also dive into Disney's ''The Little Mermaid II" for PlayStation (MSRP: $29.99, ESRB: E) this holiday season and swim with their favorite characters from the home video. One of the longest-running cartoons of all time, ''Scooby-Doo" television programming spans more than three decades and has a 93% awareness rating across all age demographics.

Families will now be able to join Scooby, Shaggy and the gang in an interactive adventure with ''Scooby-Doo: Classic Creep Capers" (Nintendo 64, MSRP: $49.99; ESRB: E).

Sports Entertainment enthusiasts will not be left out in the cold this holiday season with THQ and JAKKS Pacific's pulse-pounding WWF lineup.

Gamers can hit the mats with something for almost every game console: ''WWFSmackDown! 2: Know Your Role" for PlayStation (MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: T), ''WWF No Mercy" for Nintendo 64 (MSRP: $59.99; ESRB: T) and ''WWF Royal Rumble" for Dreamcast (MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: T).

The more mature fans of the cult movie trilogy, ''Evil Dead," can finally assume the role of their favorite hero, Ash, in ''Evil Dead: Hail to the King" for PlayStation (MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: M). With a chainsaw for an arm and his trusty boomstick by his side, Ash, voiced by Bruce Campbell, slices and dices the undead in this action-packed follow-up to the films.

The casual gamer will find the perfect stocking stuffer in THQ's affordable action sports lineup.

Gamers can carve some snow or grind in the half-pipe to today's hottest music in ''MTV Sports: Pure Ride" (PlayStation, MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: E; and Game Boy Color, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E) and ''MTV Sports: Skateboarding Featuring Andy Macdonald" (PlayStation, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E; Dreamcast, MSRP: $39.99; ESRB: E; and Game Boy Color, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E).

In addition, ''Championship Motocross 2001 featuring Ricky Carmichael" (Game Boy Color, MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E) offers handheld owners the system's first Championship Motocross thrill this holiday season.

Gamers on the go will delight in THQ's extensive library of Game Boy Color games. Familiar titles include, ''Who Wants to Be a Millionaire Second Edition" (MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E), ''Star Wars: Obi-Wan's Adventures" (MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E), ''Micro Machines V3" (MSRP: $19.99; ESRB: E), ''Chicken Run" (MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E) and ''Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (MSRP: $29.99; ESRB: E).

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE Magazine's Reader Survey - November, 2000
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Total = 93 votes.

Question:

What was the worst moment in Atari History?

Answers:

Warner Communications buying Atari	2.20 % (2)
Jack Tramiel buying Atari	3.30 % (3)
Jack Tramiel selling Atari	9.89 % (9)
Lack of advertising	24.18 % (22)
Failure to find a "niche" market	0.00 % (0)
Failure to update the technology	14.29 % (13)
Hasbro buying Atari and not knowing what they have	39.56 % (36)

=~=~=~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Seeks Reversal of Antitrust Ruling

Microsoft filed a long appellate brief Monday arguing it must not be broken in two and denying every element of a lower court ruling that it had violated antitrust law.

Microsoft said the ‘‘entire proceeding" before U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson had been ‘‘infected with error," and that the ‘‘existing trial record was insufficient to support the radical relief" requested by the Justice Department.

In fact, Microsoft told the appeals court that its Windows operating system did not even constitute a monopoly if the market in which it operates is ‘‘properly defined": ‘‘Microsoft does not possess ’monopoly power,"’ argued the firm in its written argument.

But the Justice Department said that the June 7 decision by Judge Jackson to break up the company -- after finding that Microsoft used its monopoly power in personal computer operating systems to compete illegally -- was ‘‘well supported by trial evidence."

Microsoft Tells Court It Acted Legally

Microsoft on Monday denied it held a monopoly or had violated antitrust law, and asked an appeals court to throw out a lower court ruling that would break it into two separate companies.

In a 150-page brief ahead of oral arguments set for February, Microsoft said District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson ruled incorrectly that its business practices were anti-competitive.

‘‘Far from violating the antitrust laws, Microsoft’s conduct was pro-competitive, producing enormous consumer benefits," the company told the United States Court of Appeals.

Microsoft argued that the ‘‘entire proceeding" before Jackson was ‘‘infected with error." And it said his order breaking up the company amounted to ‘‘radical relief."

Shares of Microsoft rose $3/4 to close at $70-11/16 on the Nasdaq market during a day when the market generally enjoyed rising prices on hopes the U.S. presidential election impasse was reaching an end.

Jackson ordered on June 7 that the company be broken up and also set other remedies, all of which have been suspended pending appeal.

The trial judge ruled that the company ‘‘placed an oppressive thumb on the scale of competitive fortune" through its unfair and illegal practices and that its anti-competitive

actions ‘‘trammeled the competitive process through which the computer industry generally stimulates innovation and conduces to the optimum benefit of consumers."

Jackson found that Microsoft holds monopoly power in the market for personal computer operating systems with its Windows product and illegally used that power to exclude competitors.

But the Redmond, Wash.-based software giant told the appeals court that Windows is not a monopoly if the market is "properly defined" to include Apple Computer products, personal digital assistants like the Palm Inc's Pilot and other operating systems.

The company also challenged the finding that it had tried to monopolize the Web browser market, saying its vigorous competition with Netscape had not foreclosed the market to the rival browser, now owned by America Online Inc.

Jackson found that Microsoft decided it could not beat Netscape merely by giving it away so it decided to ''constrict Netscape's access to the distribution channels."

Replied Microsoft: ''There is no finding that the inclusion of (Internet Explorer) in Windows prevented Netscape from getting (Netscape) Navigator into the hands of consumers." It said that 160 million copies were distributed in 1998 alone.

Jackson also found that the company illegally tied its Web browser to Windows, forcing consumers to purchase the two together without any increased benefits. Jackson said the combination was to the detriment of consumers, because the firm forced computer makers ''to ignore consumer demand for a browserless version of Windows."

Microsoft said Jackson's conclusion was wrong because the integration provided benefits unavailable with a separate browser, citing HTML help, Windows update and the user interface.

Jackson's overall handling of the case was also criticized in Microsoft's brief, in particular the adoption of the government's breakup proposal without holding further hearings and the judge's repeated public statements about the merits of the case, even during the trial itself.

''These public comments alone require that the judgement be vacated," Microsoft said. If any part of the judgement was not reversed, then the remainder of the case should be remanded to a different judge for a new trial, the company said.

The Justice Department and states that brought the case had urged the U.S. Supreme Court to directly hear the company's appeal. But the high court sided with Microsoft and sent the case to the lower appellate court, which ruled for the company in a related case in 1998.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said the government remained confident in its case and looked forward to its presentation to the appeals court.

''The judgement is well-supported by the evidence offered during a 78-day trial including thousands of pages of Microsoft's own documents," said spokeswoman Gina Talamona. The government is due to file its brief on Jan. 12.

Whatever the outcome, the case seems certain to be appealed to the Supreme Court, barring any settlement between the parties.

The result of the disputed U.S. presidential election could play a role. Political analysts and antitrust experts have speculated that an administration under Republican George W. Bush would be inclined to cut a deal with Microsoft if the company wins at the appeals court level.

New Spin On Microsoft Case As Big Names Bow Out

Major changes in the cast of characters in Microsoft’s courtroom drama could have a far greater impact on the company’s appeal than any legal briefs.

While the issues have changed little, the case’s future may be profoundly affected by the absence of three pivotal figures: U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein and lead prosecution attorney David Boies.

Jackson is expected to be removed from future proceedings, giving way to seven fresh judges who have taken over the case, and Klein has left his post as head of the Justice Department’s antitrust division. But it is Boies’ predicament that is most interesting of all.

By joining Vice President Al Gore’s legal team in the electoral battle in Florida, the government’s outside counsel has almost ensured that he will play no further role in the Microsoft case should George W. Bush become president, legal experts say. Boies is largely credited for engineering the government’s unprecedented legal victory, through courtroom theatrics, sharp questioning of Microsoft witnesses and facile use of the media.

"Gauging the odds of Gore’s chief spokesman in the bitterly contested Florida election battle being the chief advocate for the Bush administration in their most important case...it’s not going to happen," University of Baltimore Law School professor Bob Lande said.

On Monday, the software giant filed the principal legal brief of its antitrust appeal--150 pages attacking the presiding judge, how he handled his courtroom and the way he applied antitrust law to the company’s offenses. In June, Jackson ordered that Microsoft be broken into separate operating-systems and software-applications companies after earlier ruling the company violated U.S. antitrust law.

"Prior to the last two weeks, it wouldn’t necessarily have meant David Boies wouldn’t argue at the Court of Appeals under a Bush administration," said John Smith, an antitrust attorney with Nixon Peabody here. "Now, it would seem to me very hard to have David Boies argue in a Bush administration."

Opinions about the effects of Boies’ absence vary. Some sources close to the government insist that he had largely fulfilled his job and would have had a minor part in the appeals process.

Yet if that’s true, his role, "while extremely impressive, leaves a lot undone," George Washington University School of Law professor Bill Kovacic said. "It’s like getting off the train before it reaches hostile territory."

The same argument could be made about the unexpected departure of Klein, whom A. Douglas Melamed is temporarily replacing as acting assistant attorney general.

"The loss of Joel Klein--his best skill was as an appellate lawyer--on the one hand means the government loses some global thinking," said Mark Ostrau, an antitrust attorney with Fenwick & West in Palo Alto, Calif. "On

the other hand, Doug Melamed is also very appellate minded and probably more enforcement minded than Klein."

Both Boies and Klein came to personify the case in countless media appearances, some of which helped galvanize public opinion and possibly that of Jackson. But that is not appropriate for the next phase of the case, legal experts say.

"The stuff that David Boies is so good at--playing to the finder of fact at the trial level or at the court of public opinion--doesn't play well with the appellate level," Ostrau said. He described the appeals process as "cold and dispassionate," devoid of "the human element. Ultimately, that's where the government has its toughest row to hoe."

Interestingly, some believe that the departures of Microsoft's chief antagonists will not necessarily work in the company's favor.

"If you read the insider accounts that have been coming out, the suns around which these planets are orbiting are Klein-Boies," Kovacic said. "If I'm one of the professional staff people doing the heavy lifting, I get tired of that."

With Boies and Klein gone, there might be renewed enthusiasm among longtime staffers determined to hold onto what increasingly looks like their tenuous victory, Kovacic added.

Equally unclear is the effect of the presidential election. Few legal experts believe that a Bush administration would drastically change the case's direction or immediately push for settlement talks, something Microsoft likely would reject anyway.

"Microsoft's principal goal is to crush Judge Jackson's ruling and secure a higher court's favorable precedent," said Hillard Sterling, an antitrust attorney with Gordon & Glickson in Chicago. "Microsoft has little incentive to cut a deal and diminish its chance for reversal."

Still, the change in administration would come at a crucial juncture in the government's case: preparation of a Jan. 12 brief on the appeal and oral arguments scheduled for Feb. 26 and 27.

Many legal experts predict that under a Gore administration Melamed would deliver the important oral argument. A Bush victory would cast a shadow over his role and possibly throw the government camp into disarray.

But Sterling believes the case is so far along that even serious personnel changes "would not have any significant impact. What you'll see is a change in approach and emphasis."

Kovacic believes the delays certifying a winner in the presidential race will likely prevent a Bush administration from putting a new attorney general in place before oral arguments. "The key political appointees at the very top of the antitrust division will be there for the next two months, which are pretty vital for the briefing process," he said.

No matter what the political outcome, the change in venue--from District Court to the Court of Appeals--will have an enormous impact on the case.

Microsoft and Jackson had history coming into this case forged during an earlier proceeding, legal experts say, and that showed during the trial. Boies effectively played off this, with some help from Microsoft,

impugning the company’s credibility.

"Microsoft totally blew their credibility with Jackson, so he countered every inference against them," Lande said.

But before the appellate court, "Microsoft gets a clean slate from these seven judges," Lande added. "Even if we forget the fact they’re more conservative, Microsoft hasn’t burned their bridges with these judges."

Senate Panel Presses FBI for Carnivore Data

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday continued to press the FBI on Carnivore, the surveillance tool said capable of capturing and storing all electronic traffic moving through an Internet gateway.

Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican, and ranking Democrat Patrick Leahy of Vermont asked FBI Director Louis Freeh to spell out Carnivore’s reach and address concerns that it might trample on constitutional rights.

The system is installed at an Internet service provider (ISP) to keep court-ordered tabs on a criminal suspect’s e-mail and instant messages.

The FBI previously has told the panel -- concerned about a breach of the U.S. Constitution’s Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure -- that Carnivore captures only a narrow field of information for which interception is authorized.

Specifically, this information is either source and destination data in the case of a court-ordered ‘‘trap and trace" operation or full messages in a wiretap order, FBI Assistant Director Donald Kerr told the panel on Sept. 6.

In a Nov. 21 letter to Freeh, Hatch and Leahy cited records of a test showing Carnivore ‘‘could reliably capture and archive all unfiltered traffic" transmitted through an ISP and store the communications on a hard drive or removable disks.

The June 5 document at issue was produced by the FBI in response to a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a private Washington-based civil liberties organization.

‘‘Please explain why Carnivore was tested to determine if it was capable of intercepting and archiving unfiltered traffic through an ISP, whether Carnivore in fact has that capability, and under what circumstances it could ever be legitimately used to draw on that capability," they asked Freeh.

They also asked for ‘‘complete and non-redacted copies" of documents handed over so far in response to the FOIA lawsuit together with ‘‘any other documents related to Carnivore’s capability to intercept and archive unfiltered traffic."

‘‘Skepticism about Carnivore is based precisely on concerns about this program’s capability and whether this capability would be exploited to do more than just intercept narrowly targeted pieces of information," the

senators told Freeh.

The FBI had no immediate comment on the letter, sent on the same day that the Justice Department released an outside review panel's draft report on Carnivore.

When correctly used, Carnivore ''provides investigators with no more information than is permitted by a given court order," the IIT Research Institute, an arm of the Illinois Institute of Technology, said in its draft.

The institute called Carnivore potentially ''more effective in protecting privacy and enabling lawful surveillance" than alternatives.

Attorney General Janet Reno ordered an independent review of Carnivore's inner workings after a stir in Congress. The Justice Department had no immediate comment on Hatch and Leahy's letter.

Assistant Attorney General Stephen Colgate, head of the review panel that will make recommendations to Reno on Carnivore, told Reuters last week that a new version of Carnivore ''probably will begin being used shortly after the new year."

He said his panel would make recommendations to Reno on "improvements that need to be made in the system" after taking account of the outside review panel's suggestions.

Two To Pay Government in Web Pyramid Scam

Two Connecticut residents agreed to pay the federal government more than $72,000 to settle allegations they operated a pyramid scheme on the Internet.

Deana Plourde and David Martinelli disguised their operation as a work-at-home arrangement, the Federal Trade Commission said Tuesday. Thousands of consumers were victimized, said FTC lawyer Katie Harrington-McBride.

Plourde and Martinelli, of Terryville, Conn., sent consumers e-mail messages offering hourly wages to those who agreed to ''handle office duties from home," the FTC said, citing one e-mail offer.

Those who responded were told they had to pay ''registration fees" ranging from $9.95 to $28.72.

In exchange, participants received kits instructing them to place ads identical to the ones they had responded to. Instead of receiving an hourly wage, participants earned a wage based on the number of others they recruited, the FTC said.

Pyramid and work-at-home schemes are becoming increasingly common on the Internet, but the Plourde and Martinelli operation was unique in that it combined the two, McBride said.

It wasn't clear how many people were victimized, she said. Plourde and Martinelli took in about $430,000, and paid out an unknown sum to participants.

Plourde and Martinelli agreed not to participate in future pyramid schemes, and to pay the FTC $72,312. The money will go to victims or to the U.S. Treasury, at the commission’s discretion.

AOL Is World’s Leading Provider

Lynne Keyser isn’t bothered by techies who deride her online service as ‘‘Internet on training wheels." In fact, that’s why she likes America Online.

Keyser has plenty of company, too.

By targeting newcomers, AOL has become the world’s leading Internet provider. It recently surpassed 25 million subscribers, some 85 percent of them in the United States.

The Dulles-based company is widely credited with opening the online world to the masses. The secret: dumbing down the AOL interface to appeal to the millions who might have otherwise have balked.

‘‘It’s been a good introduction for an idiot savant," said Keyser, 45, an interior designer in Travers City, Mich. ‘‘Most of us who aren’t that computer literate are going to take the easier path."

Now, AOL is poised to get very big indeed - so big that federal regulators reviewing its proposed acquisition of Time Warner Inc. want to make the combined company open its cable systems to competing Internet providers.

AOL Time Warner would have greater control of both the message and the delivery method, offering customers one-stop shopping unmatched by rivals. And AOL would have done so with little technological innovation.

The online giant, launched in 1989, has thrived despite several pronouncements through the years of its impending death. When a move to flat pricing in 1996 led to busy signals, critics coined ‘‘America Offline" or ‘‘America On Hold". AOL gave partial refunds to settle a class-action lawsuit - and moved on.

Its practice has often been to dismiss or delay technological breakthroughs as too difficult for the average user.

Until late October, for instance, AOL’s software couldn’t read messages heavy in graphics or sort e-mail by sender, though such features are common elsewhere.

Even its corporate offices and five ‘‘creative centers" where one-fifth of AOL’s 15,000 employees work have a non-tech feel, discounting rooms oddly named after disk sectors, as in 46B:J00. The computers that run AOL are hidden in other buildings, fortified to withstand natural disasters and even a dropped jet engine.

AOL’s strength was always targeting consumers - specifically first-time users - while rivals CompuServe and Prodigy went after businesses. Today, AOL owns CompuServe, which has 2.8 million subscribers. Prodigy has 2.7 million.

In favoring simplicity over functionality, AOL persuaded computer-shy Americans to try out e-mail, instant messaging and other tools - and got them hooked.

‘‘AOL has done a great job of encouraging people," said Stacy Elliott, digital lifestyle adviser at Microsoft Corp., whose competing MSN service has 3.5 million subscribers. ‘‘They have some good marketing."

America Online already had 1 million subscribers by 1994, the year people began discovering the Internet en masse. Millions more have since signed up through promotional disks stuffed into mailboxes or falling out of newspaper inserts.

AOL’s ‘‘You’ve Got Mail" chant became popular enough to spawn a movie with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

For many Americans, AOL is the Internet.

Still, many veterans consider the service a joke and frown on its users as clueless ‘‘newbies" who wander cyberspace without the proper training in etiquette and techniques.

‘‘Introducing new people in itself is a good thing," said James R. Curry, 23, a Web designer and programmer in Louisville, Ky., ‘‘but AOL has traditionally thrown people into the water without a life preserver."

One Internet service provider, FlexNet, won’t even take former AOL users, complaining that they lack technical sophistication.

That’s fine, from AOL’s standpoint.

As senior vice president Jonathan Sacks puts it, AOL users have no need to switch even as their skills improve, just as motorists with automatic transmissions don’t later change to manual.

While rivals take an a la carte approach, AOL packages access, tools and content together, so that teens can chat with friends, moms can coordinate soccer schedules and dads can check on stock quotes - all from one service.

The company has also been adept at consolidation.

In recent years, AOL bought Mapquest’s online maps and Moviefone’s movie schedules and ticket sales. Soon, Sacks said, Citibank cardholders on AOL will be able to send digital cash to friends online.

AOL wants to become a necessity. Its mission statement: ‘‘To build a global medium as central to people’s lives as the telephone or television ... and even more valuable."

To keep intermediate users from deserting, the company now offers the most popular features through a range of cell phones and other handheld devices, including a two-way paging unit announced Thursday. For an extra fee, AOL lets users check e-mail over a regular telephone and chat on a television set.

By letting members - always with the same password - access personal address books, calendars, e-mail and other services from all manner of machine, AOL strategists reason that few people will abandon them for competing services.

The same strategy is expected to apply also to the high-speed broadband services that AOL will be able to provide to Time Warner’s 12.6 million cable subscribers.

‘‘AOL really is the bellwether," said Patrick Keane, a senior analyst at Jupiter Research. ‘‘Now, AOL can really be a kingmaker with broadband."

Keane believes consumer inertia will be strongly in AOL’s favor as different media converge.

Ruth Sawyer, 72, a retired bookkeeper in Daphne, Ala., got her Internet start on AOL five years ago because most of her friends had AOL accounts. She resists calls from family members to switch.

‘‘I’m familiar with it and the idea of how it operates and how to find things," she said.

Tony Torti, 43, a network consultant in Narragansett, R.I., said his teen-age daughters ‘‘would be gravely disappointed" if he were to cancel AOL. For one thing, changing e-mail addresses would be a pain.

No matter that at $21.95 a month, the service costs a few bucks more than many rivals.

To lure new users, AOL recently introduced an Internet appliance, built by Gateway, that need only be plugged in and connected to a phone line. AOL is also distributing a ‘‘Wired in a Week" book through Time Warner for people scared to even insert a promotional disk without handholding.

The company has also shipped disks with Time Warner magazines and is considering other tie-ins such as an AOL television show.

Although AOL executives say they won’t discriminate against other companies, they acknowledge the value of cross promotions. Already, ads for Time Warner’s Sports Illustrated pop up when users log on.

That could backfire, warned Andrew Bartels, an e-business analyst at Giga Information Group.

He said content providers may look elsewhere for partnerships if they perceive discrimination. In fact, the Internet portal Yahoo! reports increased inquiries from providers of news since the AOL merger was announced in January.

Complaints aren’t likely to diminish as the subscriber base grows.

Over the years, AOL has been accused of unevenly enforcing its usage policies.

At one point, it briefly purged the word ‘‘breast" from its services, deeming the term obscene or vulgar. The company lifted the ban only after women complained that it stifled discussion about breast cancer.

‘‘Under the guise of helping grandma, they establish policies that control user experiences sometimes to their detriment," said David Cassel, who writes an ‘‘AOL Watch" newsletter.

Critics also complain of having e-mail blocked or of being unable to send instant messages to users of rival services.

AOL refuses to release cancellation figures. But Ted Leonsis, president of AOL's Interactive Properties group, insists that ''if people didn't like it, they wouldn't keep coming."

Raymond J. Oglethorpe, president of AOL's technology group, says complaints often come from advanced users, not AOL's targeted home audience.

''When I hear this thing that AOL is training wheels for the Internet or it's clunky, I know we are doing our job," he said. ''The Mom and Pop consumers, they just want to go in there and turn that computer on and go."

Electronic Accessories on Xmas List

The personal computer may not be dead, but it's showing signs of age as consumers are drawn to newer, hipper electronic gadgets.

''Right now, we have all the features on our computer that we need. There's nothing really new that's out there," Diana Poston, 19, said while shopping this week for a DVD player at a Circuit City in Glendale.

The stocks of computer manufacturers took a nosedive this week as Gateway, Micron, Hewlett-Packard Co. and others warned that sluggish domestic demand would mean lower profits for the foreseeable future. Those warnings also dragged down other computer industry stocks, including Microsoft.

The trigger for the profit warnings was lower-than-expected sales over the Thanksgiving weekend. But computer makers and analysts have been worried about weaker sales for months, especially as the general economy has shown continued signs of slowing and rising oil prices have eaten up more of consumers' disposable income.

''Macroeconomics have caught up with everybody after a decade-long party," Roger Kay, an analyst with International Data Corp, said Friday. ''Consumers with fewer disposable dollars are looking to throttle back their holiday purchases and buy lower ticket items, such as things that plug into PCs and other devices."

Sales of desktop computers fell 10 percent in October compared to the same period last year, following three months of slow or no growth, according to PC Data.

''The heady, carefree days of double-digit growth are over," Kay said.

In contrast, sales of digital cameras rose 30 percent in October year over year, while flat panel monitors showed a 150 percent increase and even standard 19-inch monitors rose 50 percent. Sales of handheld computers and personal digital assistants were up more than 100 percent.

Those trends have a bigger impact on a company such as Gateway, which derives more than 50 percent of its revenue from domestic sales, according to analysts. That dependence may have led to what some feel is Gateway's overreaction to one weekend's worth of sales.

''A lot of people are saying, 'My God, how could you make that call so early?"' Jeffrey Weitzen, president and chief executive officer of Gateway, said in a speech Thursday. ''We saw data that was clearly alarming

over the Thanksgiving weekend and we knew it was important to get that information out early.

‘‘In the fourth quarter last year, we did not have the right product lineup," Weitzen said. ‘‘That’s not the problem this year. What we’re suffering from right now is we’re not selling enough units."

Hewlett-Packard said Thursday that while it expected lower profits next year, it would not be as affected by slow domestic growth because less than 10 percent of its business relies on domestic PC sales.

Adding to computer makers’ woes is a feeling that the PC market is saturated and won’t pick up again for at least a year.

‘‘Everybody’s got a PC," Martin Reynolds, an analyst at the Gartner Group, said. ‘‘About 60 percent of homes have a PC and many of those have a second PC."

Brett Miller, an analyst at AG Edwards, said that unlike past years, when fast new computer chips or feature-packed software programs combined with offers of rebates to fuel PC sales, there is no compelling reason this year for consumers to upgrade.

‘‘There are not applications out there that I can’t run on the PC I already have, ‘‘Miller said. ‘‘The PC is getting kind of old in terms of what it does. People are spending money on home networks, PDAs, digital cameras, consumer electronics. There are a lot of things getting people’s attention."

The corporate market has held steady this year, but has lagged mainly because companies bought equipment as early as 1997 in anticipation of disruptions from the Y2K bug.

Corporate sales are expected to pick up late next year as companies upgrade to more powerful machines than can run the new Microsoft operating system, Windows 2000.

Bad news for computer makers may mean good news for consumers who wait a few months to buy. Slower sales and a desire to reduce inventories may lead companies to cut prices, even before the end of the year.

‘‘Companies don’t want to get stuck with inventory after the new year," Kay said. ‘‘It ages rather quickly."

The challenge for computer makers is to enter more markets and expand their offerings to include wireless devices.

Late this year, Compaq introduced its handheld iPaq. And Gateway started selling an Internet device called the Connected Touch Pad, designed to offer easy Internet access from a kitchen counter or anyplace else where bulky personal computers usually are shunned.

‘‘Gateway understands the trend," Miller said. ‘‘They know they are too PC-centric. They are moving into consumer appliances, home and business networking. It’s just too little, too late."

What Price Digital Photos?

The advent of low prices is threatening to give digital cameras a bad image.

That’s the concern of some analysts and manufacturers as consumers flock to buy sub-$200 digital cameras. Plummeting prices have brought the once $1,000-plus category down to a range affordable for many holiday shoppers.

But the cameras that many consumers would want to own, analysts say, still cost much more--in the range of $350 to $999. Consumers buying the lowest-cost cameras may feel more like Santa left a lump of coal in their stockings than a digital delight. Retailers worry disappointment could lead to high returns--as much as 50 percent--after the holidays.

"Prices have been falling fairly rapidly, but not rapidly enough where that feature-rich camera is going to be in the golden, $199 price point," said IDC analyst Chris Chute. "That won’t happen until next year."

The promise of digital cameras is alluring: taking pictures that can be stored electronically and transferred to a PC. No film. No processing. Just instant memories that can be printed or sent to faraway friends and relatives via email.

But consumers need to keep in mind that digital capability doesn’t automatically mean high-tech wizardry. As with any product, consumers must look beyond the marketing hype and apparent good deals to find the digital camera best suited to their needs. For those interested in easy, low-resolution photos for email, low-cost cameras could in fact be the ticket, but those seeking a replacement for film won’t find it for $200, say analysts and camera makers.

Many cheap cameras are just that--cheap. But unlike their lowest-cost film counterparts, which still take pretty good pictures, digital cameras bring with them a wide gulf between picture quality and price. And picture quality varies widely from camera to camera, as do features.

The bulk of the sub-$200 cameras sport a VGA resolution of 640-by-480 pixels, which produces reasonable snapshots for email and small reproductions, but not much better. "We expect we can get an excellent three-by-five picture output out of that but no larger," said Richard Pelkowski, associate product manager at Olympus America.

XGA (extended graphics array) and 1-megapixel cameras push the resolution to 1,024-by-768 pixels, which allows printing of adequate pictures up to 5-by-7 inches.

"They were state-of-the-art 18 months to two years ago," said PC Data analyst Stephen Baker. Still, "you get what you pay for, even when the old technology migrates down."

While well-known names in photography, such as Eastman Kodak and Polaroid, offer 1-megapixel cameras for around $200, many important features for a satisfying experience are missing, analysts say.

The problem is that digital cameras in this price range offer no frills, Chute said. "There’s no LCD, multiflash mode, optical zoom" or other niceties that go beyond the basics, he said. "Consumers tend to give up too easy if features like USB are missing."

The sweet spot, in terms of features and performance, is closer to $350 or

higher, Chute said. The low-cost models are right for "someone who is new to digital cameras or someone who doesn't care about quality very much."

There is no question that consumers want digital cameras and are snapping up low-cost models. While prices on 1-megapixel and 1.3-megapixel cameras are rapidly falling into the $199 to $299 range, cheaper VGA models have overrun the sub-$200 category.

PC Data found that for cameras selling below $200, models below the 1-megapixel level represented 86.5 percent of retail sales, up from 58.3 percent in August. The very cheapest cameras, in terms of price and quality, are throwaways: IDC found that promotional cameras, such as those from America Online, made up close to 50 percent of the low-end camera market.

Some retailers worry that low-cost cameras could breed excessive returns following the holidays. Several consumer electronics outlets, asking not to be identified, said returns of $99 digital cameras were running close to 50 percent.

National retailer Wolf Camera had a 50 percent return on one $149 device, said Greg Bragg, the company's vice president of purchasing. "People were just so disgusted...When you're used to seeing a picture from a still camera, and you think you're going to get that from a digital camera and you don't, it's very, very dissatisfying."

Bragg said that experience convinced Wolf to "get away" from the under-$200 price.

Other retailers said that returns for cameras closer to $200 varied widely depending on the manufacturer and features, but many were below 10 percent. And low-cost leader Polaroid has told analysts that the percentage of returns is in the single digits.

"Under 10 percent is pretty good," PC Data's Baker said. "This shows retailers are doing a good job of managing expectations, or consumers are getting what they want."

Olympus manager Pelkowski acknowledged that absolutely low-cost cameras do disappoint some consumers, "but I think some of them were very pleased with what they got for the money. They were digital. They were sharing pictures on the Internet."

People looking for fairly good pictures need to consider the more costly 2-megapixel and 3-megapixel cameras, according to Pelkowski. In fact, say analysts and camera makers, the difference in picture quality between 1 megapixel and 2 megapixels is significant.

This drives the price up into the $300 to $500 range for good 2.1-megapixel cameras and $700 to $1,000 for 3.3-megapixel models.

With important features such as optical zoom, LCD displays, and resolutions up to 1,600-by-1,200 pixels, 2.1-megapixel cameras will please most consumers, said Willy Shih, senior vice president at Kodak. Beyond that, digital cameras offer quality of output and advanced features that can make them strong rivals to film cameras.

"I have some 3-megapixel shots that are every bit as good as film," Shih said.

But getting the most out of a good digital camera is still an expensive proposition. Having the right printer, even the right printing paper, can make all the difference.

"It’s amazing sometimes how a good paper can make a cheap camera look better," Shih said.

Retooled Navidad Virus On The Loose

Symantec’s AntiVirus Research Center has discovered a new, more potent variant to the "Navidad" virus.

Early this month, the email virus infected computers in at least 10 Fortune 500 companies, causing more annoyance than destruction, computer experts said.

That original version had buggy code, disabling a relaunch feature that was intended to bombard victims with repeated attacks. That bad code has been fixed in a new version, making it potentially more damaging. In all other respects, the two variations are identical.

The virus infects Microsoft’s Outlook email application, arriving as a reply when a person sends a message to an infected computer. If the attachment, "navidad.exe," is run, a message in Spanish reads: "Never press this button." If the button is pressed, a further message reads: "Feliz Navidad. Unfortunately you have given in to temptation and will lose your computer."

Patrick Martin, program manager for Symantec’s AntiVirus Research Center (SARC), said the variant was discovered Tuesday. SARC is giving it a threat level of three--with five considered the highest security threat.

"It’s out there; we’re keeping our eyes on it, but there’s no need to panic," Martin said. "It’s definitely not anything like ’Love Letter.’ It largely doesn’t do anything damaging to your system, and it spreads itself a lot more slowly."

Martin said that the original Navidad worm would launch only once, inserting itself in a reply to all emails with attachments in the victim’s in-box. In the new version, the worm relaunches every time the email program is activated.

Martin said the original version included a typo disabling the repeat launch feature. He said it looked like someone had fixed the problem.

"It’s like you were a terrorist, and you designed a bomb, but you didn’t plug in the fuse right," Martin said. "Somebody else came along and...fixed it so it would do its dirty work correctly."

Martin said that SARC suspects the Navidad virus may have started somewhere in Latin America.

"It caught attention because of the term Navidad," Martin said. "People thought it was a Christmas worm...Since a lot of text that shows up is in Spanish, we assume it probably came somewhere in Latin America."

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc.is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.